

Testimony of the Connecticut Restaurant Association  
Regarding HB 5226 AAC QUALIFIED ALCOHOL SERVERS  
February 23, 2010  
Before the General Law Committee

The Connecticut Restaurant Association strongly supports RB 5226 AAC QUALIFIED ALCOHOL SERVERS.

HB 5226 would mandate that every restaurant, café or tavern that has a liquor permit assure that at least one of its employees who is serving alcohol as a bartender, is properly trained in alcohol service and safety by January 1, 2011. It further requires that every bartender be certified by 2013.

Many restaurants are already providing at least some alcohol training for their servers, and insurers have started requiring such training. The Association recognizes the increasing need for consistent, effective training of alcohol servers so that everyone has the knowledge they need to make the right decision in critical situations. Connecticut would not be alone in establishing standards for alcohol servers. There are currently 15 other states with a mandated alcohol server program.

While there are various entities offering alcohol server courses, the one we are most familiar with is the National Restaurant Association's ServSafe Alcohol course. This national certification course covers the following curriculum as outlined in the table of contents:

1. Alcohol law and your responsibility
2. Recognizing and preventing intoxication
3. Checking identification
4. Handling difficult situations

In order to be effective, any certification program such as this should be tailored specifically to the Connecticut law. Connecticut laws differ from other states' in a variety of areas, including for example:

- strict liability under dram shop law;
- use of the statement of age form;
- restrictions on drink promotions;
- wine doggie bag law;
- criminal, civil and administrative penalties and liabilities.

We would suggest that all of the Connecticut specific requirements be included in any certification program approved by the Commissioner. Therefore, we recommend adding the following language to the bill, after line 102: "Any such program shall incorporate all pertinent Connecticut laws into its program."

We appreciate the Committee's consideration of HB 5226 and we urge its adoption.